THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Minimum Support Price (MSP) of wheat at Rs. 650 per quintal for 2005-06 season has been recently announced by the Governement and there is no proposal before the Government to increase the MSP of wheat.

(b) and (c) The Government has no proposal to increase the MSP of agricultural products. MSP for onion is not fixed by Government. However, the Government implements the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of horticultural and perishable agricultural commodities, including onion. MIS is implemented for a particular commodity on the request of the State Government which is ready to bear 50% loss (25% in case of North Eastern States), if any, in its implementation.

Plan for dry and farming

1071. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether dry land and the rain-fed areas, constituting 60 per cent of the zone areas in the country, are a major challenge; and

(b) if so, Government's plans to stimulate dry land farming for arid and semi-arid regions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTUE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Dry land and rainfed areas are a major challenge for the country because of their low productivity. The Ministry of Agriculture has formulated a new scheme 'Enhancing Sustainability of Dry land Farming Systems' to address the problems of dryland farming in semi-arid and arid regions of the country particularly in the districts having low annual rainfall and less coverage under irrigation.

Failure of BT. Cotton in Tamil Nadu

†1072. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the attempts of growers for producing Bt. cotton in Tamil Nadu are now ending in failure after the same failed in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether any assessment has been made for the loss incurred by growers of Tamil Nadu due to said reasons; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.